

falsely and impudently call pleasure, is only the sensuality of a swine;"¹ in Letter CCLXXIX, "From my original plan for your education, I meant to make you un homme universal;"² and in Letter CCXC, "I had two views in your education. Those two were parliamentary and foreign affairs. In consequence of those views, I took care, first, to give you a sufficient stock of sound learning, and next, an early knowledge of the world."³ Thus the Letters are the embodiment of Lord Chesterfield's cherished hopes and ambitions. As mentioned previously in the biography of Chesterfield, he was conversant with the court life and conduct of a gentleman and knew the traits and characteristics most coveted and desirable.

Much has been written and said by critics and laymen about the moral and ethical tone of the Letters. One of the most widely known criticisms is Dr. Johnson's, "They teach the morals of a whore, and the manners of a dancing master."⁴ This criticism, however, one must remember is by one who harbored a personal ill feeling toward the writer. Frances Burney says of the Letters, "They are well written; but were written with a tendency to make his son a man wholly unprincipled, inculcating immorality, countenancing all gentleman-like vices, advising deceit and exhorting to inconsistency."⁵ James O'Donnell Bennett writes, "It defines and recommends principles of conduct which would have made his son a truckler and a fawner. For a century and a half it has been steadily read

1. Lord Chesterfield's Letters to His Son, Lett r CL, p 159.

2. op. cit., Letter CCLXXIX, p 446.

3. op. cit., Letter CCXC, pp 468.

4. Life of Johnson, Boswell, vol. 1, pp 307 f.

5. Early Diary, ed. Ellis, vol. 1, p 305.